Public Space Contact in the Södra Station Area – A Place for Public Life

Linda Sofi Bäckstedt
Handledare/ Supervisor Bojan Boric
Examinator/ Examiner Anders Johansson, vice dean

Examensarbete inom arkitektur, avancerad nivå 30 hp
Degree Project in Architecture, Second Level 30 credits
16 januari 14

Public
Public space contact in the Södra station area

- A place for public life

Linda Sofi Bäckstedt
Thesis project, Arkitekturskolan Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan (2013/14)
INDEX

Thesis ................................................................. 3
Site ........................................................................... 6

REFERENCE OBSERVATIONS OF THE SÖDRA
STATION AREA ....................................................... 7

OBSERVATIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF
THE URBAN FORM .................................................... 8

EXISTING PLAN OF THE SÖDRA STATION
AREA ................................................................ 12

INTERFACE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SPACE ................................................................. 17
  A. Land-use ......................................................... 18
  B. Interface ......................................................... 20

STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING PUBLIC
LIFE ...................................................................... 22

PROPOSED PLAN OF THE SÖDRA STATION
AREA ..................................................................... 24

Main literature and references ................................. 43

Linda Sofi Bäckstedt
Thesis student
lindaba@kth.se

Supervisors:
Ann Legeby Ph.D. KTH Arkitekturskolan
Bojan Boric KTH Arbktekturskolan

External supervisors:
Anna Edbloa White Arkitekter AB
THESIS

This project investigates the urban form of the Södra station area, focusing on the interface between public and private space and proposing new urban features and land-use programs to further support and encourage public life in a central part of Södermalm.
What is a good urban environment?
“The more successfully a city mingles everyday diversity of uses and users in its everyday streets, the more successfully, casually (and economically) its people thereby enliven and support well-located parks that can thus give back grace and delight to their neighborhoods instead of vacuity.”

- Jane Jacobs (1961)
SITE

Södra station area is a central neigbourhood at Södermalm that was planned and built during the 1980s, during which it was one of the largest postmodern urban planning projects in Stockholm. The intent was to imitate the urban pattern of the central parts of Stockholm with its mixed-use diversity and hence "promote a rich social life" (Idétävling om Södra stationsområdet 1980, 4).

The inner parts of the area, such as Fatburs Kvarngata and Södermalmsallén, are car-free and traffic separated. Fatburs Bangata has the character of a local street, while Södermalmsallén has a wider layout and is classified as a «public park» according to the master-plan. The later is one of the main pedestrian connections through the area leading from Götgatan to Ringvägen. The other pedestrian connection is at the northern outer part of the area. These two parallel pathways are both central in their location and connect a generous distribution of public spaces along their way. There are five major parks within the area - Södermalmsallén, Timmermansparken, Bergsgruvan, Ånghästparken and Fatbursparken.

The outer parts of the area are defined by Magnusladulåsgatan in the south, Ringvägen in the east, Maria Bangata / Fatbursgata in the north and Svedenbergsgatan in the west. The area around Fatbursparken may be included as part of Södra station area.
REFERENCE OBSERVATIONS OF THE SÖDRA STATION AREA

- A good continuation of existing urban structure at the area boundary

During the final stage of the area’s development, Frederic Bedoire, a Swedish historian in architecture, announced Södra station area to be a good achievement considering the area boundary as a natural urban continuation (Arkitektur 1991, 17-27).

- Lack of spatial order within the area boundary

The inner parts of the area were later criticised for its lack of spatial order, or more precisely, that the only explicit order lies at its boundary, and for the difficulty to perceive the difference between public and private and the streets to be designed with the same dignity whether they are called avenue, alley or street (Plan 1994, 150-154).

- Inner streets deviate from the surrounding pattern - not a part of the general movement pattern of Södermalm

Further research of the area show that the inner streets deviate from the surrounding pattern. Integrations analysis done on a global scale of Stockholm show that the area isn’t part of the integration core of Södermalm, which implies that the area isn’t part of the general movement pattern of Södermalm. This was criticised as signs of disurbanism. Only three streets are connected to the integration core of Södermalm and these are not part of the Södra station area plan, but extensions from previous plans and set at the area boundary. These streets are Rosenlundsgatan, Swedenborgsgatan and Timmermansgatan (Marcus 2000, 132). This may indicate that not as many people are moving in the inner parts as in the outer parts.

- Few pedestrians, few destination points

It has also been observed that there are significantly fewer pedestrians in the inner part of the area compared to the streets set at the area boundary (Swedenborgsgatan, Magnus Ladulåsgatan, Rosenlundsgatan). The inner streets, such as Södermalmsallén or Fatburs Kvarngata, had relatively low pedestrian density, the lowest during weekends. The most pedestrians where observed during weekdays in the morning and in relation to the day-care centers (Choi 2012, 80).
**OBSERVATIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE URBAN FORM**

- Södermalmsallén has potential for being a lively street, but is not

Locally well-integrated streets have potential for supporting local movement. Södermalmsallén holds potential for supporting movement and being an important street within the area. Although, this is observed not being the case since the pedestrian frequency is low in general. This may be a consequence of other aspects in play, such as the complicated accessibility through mostly staircases or that Södermalmsallén doesn’t support the continuation of urban and public life with its urban design. But the other inner streets do show low potential in the diagram while the streets at the area boundary show potential, which corresponds with the pedestrian observations.

*Integration analysis (r²)*

Map showing potential for movement at a local scale. Södermalmsallén holds potential although it has been observed having low pedestrian frequency (Choi 2012).
- **Low potential for locally meeting others**

Map of accessible population within two axial steps. The maps indicate the potential for meeting others in the area, both residents and visitors (working population). It shows that the inner parts of the area haven’t as much access to other people as in the surrounding neighbourhoods, although the result isn’t as low as in the outer parts of Södermalm along Ringvägen. This implies the calm character of the Södra station area.
- Low support (entrance accessibility) towards public space

Map of accessible entrances (residential and public) within 100 m. An entrance towards public space ensures a movement in and out of the building, a frequent use of that public space and an unavoidable encounter between people, both residents and visitors. This map shows a low entrance accessibility in the inner parts of the Södra station area, which may be translated into a low support towards the public space.

Entrance accessibility within 100 m (no axial steps)
Supporting public space.

FewM | any
The urban form of the Södra station area deviates from its surroundings and has low support towards its public spaces. **How may the streets and the public spaces of the Södra station area be enliven?**
EXISTING PLAN OF THE SÖDRA STATION AREA
SÖDERMALMSALLÉN

Södermalmsallen
Close to Rosenlundsgatan and the west exit.

Södermalmsallen
Sitting area in the inner part of the park.

Södermalmsallen
One of many staircases connecting the park with the streets at the area boundary.

Södermalmsallen
Community premises in addition to the residential building.

Södermalmsallen
One of few exits towards Magnus Ladulåsgatan that aren't staircases.

Södermalmsallen
At the end of Folkungagatan, close to Fatbuparksen.
FATBURSPARKEN

Pedestrian link through the park between Södra station and Medborgareplanen.

Playground.

Boothøjgård, open facade towards the park.

Pedestrian link towards Södra station.
ÅNGHÄSTPARKEN

Pedestrian pathway and bike lane.

Public park.

Public park.
BERGSGRUVAN

Towards Rosenviksgatan and Ångbodsparken.

Path and pathway going under Rosenviksgatan, heading towards Ångbodsparken and Tanto.
INTERFACE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE

An analysis to further understand the existing urban characteristics of public space in Södra station area through the interface between public and private space and land-use. The features preset by land use and the design of ground-levels say something about how the urban space ‘mingles’ the everyday street.

Three main problems in how Södra station area supports public space:

1. Public spaces have the tendency to be ‘too private’ and therefore not fully correspond to the ‘intention’ of the spaces.

2. The interface between public and private space is mostly established through closed facades with few entrances, which does not support neither the public space nor the continuation of public life.

3. Few public functions in direct contact with the public space, that would support and enliven public life.
A. LAND-USE

An analysis to further understand the existing urban characteristics of public space in Södra station area through the interface between public and private space and land-use. The features preset by land use and the design of ground-levels say something about how the urban space ‘mingles’ the everyday street.

**Three main problems in how Södra station area supports public space:**

1. Public spaces have the tendency to be ‘too private’ and therefore not fully correspond to the ‘intention’ of the spaces.

2. The interface between public and private space is mostly established through closed facades with few entrances, which does not support neither the public space nor the continuation of public life.

3. Few public functions in direct contact with the public space, that would support and enliven public life.
FATBURSPARKEN
Public park in the Södra station area.
B. INTERFACE

An analysis to further understand the existing urban characteristics of public space in Södra station area through the interface between public and private space and land-use. The features preset by land use and the design of ground-levels say something about how the urban space ‘mingles’ the everyday street.

Three main problems in how Södra station area supports public space:

1. Public spaces have the tendency to be ‘too private’ and therefore not fully correspond to the ‘intention’ of the spaces.
2. The interface between public and private space is mostly established through closed facades with few entrances, which does not support neither the public space nor the continuation of public life.
3. Few public functions in direct contact with the public space, that would support and enliven public life.
SÖDERMALMSALLÉN
Mute facade (of a daycare center) towards public space.
STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING PUBLIC LIFE

The urban form of the Södra station area needs to establish a better support towards its public spaces. Two main incentives are at hand for an urban transformation:

1. Ensuring that the new initiatives relate directly to the general movement pattern of Södermalm, as to "picking up the flow".

2. Supporting public spaces with in-fill densification within the structure and with new land-use programs, which can establish new relations and uses through better interface.

> Relating to the general movement pattern

The idea is to integrating the general movement pattern by establishing a more direct relations to it through urban design and in-fill densification at strategic points of location.
Supporting public spaces

Establish better support through in-fill densification and property development that offer new land-use programs that encourage a diversity of uses or that enhance the interface between public and private space. The goal is to enable a continuation of public life.

Fatbursparken
Increase in public life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman 1</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman 2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariagårdstäppan</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total new pop</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total existing pop</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>372,6</td>
<td>1243,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1153</td>
<td>595,6</td>
<td>1748,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>32,38 %</td>
<td>50,85 %</td>
<td>40,61 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mixed-use and public program

- Residential
- Office
- Public activity

*Resident pop was calculated 2,5/apt (according to density calculations)
*Working pop was calculated 1/20 m² (according to density calculations)
PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE SÖDRA STATION AREA
PROPOSED PLAN BERGSGRUVAN
PROPOSED PLAN FOR FATBURSPARKEN
PROPOSED PLAN FOR SÖDERMALMSALLÉN
SECTION FATBURSPARKEN

Existing situation
SECTION FATBURSPARKEN

Proposed situation
SECTION BERGSGRUVAN

Existing situation
SECTION BERGSGRUVAN

Proposed situation
SECTION ÄNGHÄSTPARKEN

Existing situation
SECTION ÄNGHÄSTPARKEN

Proposed situation
SECTION SÖDERMALMSALLÉN
Existing situation

SECTION SÖDERMALMSALLÉN
Proposed situation
FATBURSPARKEN

Existing situation
SÖDERMALMSALLÉN

Existing situation
SÖDERMALMSALLÉN

Proposed situation
ÅNGHÄSTPARKEN

Proposed situation
MAIN LITERATURE

Documents

Academic publications
Walkability as an urban design problem - Understanding the activity of walking in the urban environment; Eunyoung Choi, KTH, Stockholm (2012).
Urban segregation and urban form - From residential segregation to segregation in public space; Ann Legeby, KTH, Stockholm (2010).
Patterns of co-presence - Spatial configuration and social segregation; Ann Legeby, KTH, Stockholm (2013).

Data and statistics
GIS-data, Spatial Analysis and Design (SAD), KTH
Statistik om Stockholm. områdesfakta, Södra Stationsstadsdel, www.statistikomstockholm.se

Literature
The death and life of great american cities; Jane Jacobs (1961).